



Washington State Department of Agriculture

Hearing Notice

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Mustard plant proposed for state weed list at Nov. 18 hearing in Ellensburg

OLYMPIA – Hoary alyssum, a member of the mustard plant family that is suspected of being toxic to horses and is spreading rapidly in northeastern Washington, is one of five plants that would be added to the state noxious weed list under a proposal to be heard by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. The public hearing to add or change the control requirements for 13 plants will occur at 1:30 p.m. Nov. 18 at the Washington Cattlemen's Association at 1301 Dolarway in Ellensburg.

Noxious weeds are non-native, invasive plants that are highly destructive, competitive or difficult to control and, once established, threaten Washington's natural resources and economy. The board annually reviews the state's noxious weed list, which has 119 plants listed and is the basis for weed regulation in the state.

Hoary alyssum, which also goes by the botanical name *Berteroa incana*, was first noted in Pend Oreille County in 1969. "During the last three to four years we have seen an explosion in the spread and density of infestations in Ferry County," wrote the Ferry County Noxious Weed Control Board, which proposed the listing along with the weed board in Stevens County. If adopted, the proposal would make hoary alyssum a Class B weed and designate it for mandatory control by landowners everywhere in the state except Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Spokane and Lincoln counties, plus a portion of Okanogan County. In these areas, control is decided at the local level, with containment the primary goal.

Under state weed law, "control" of a weed requires prevention of the production and dispersal of all seed or other reproductive structures by the plant. Control methods vary from mechanical means such as hand pulling of weeds, herbicide applications, the introduction of beneficial insects, the planting of competing native vegetation and other activities. County noxious weed control boards and weed districts carry out the state's noxious weed law at the local level.

Queen-devil hawkweed, thought to be a hybrid between meadow and tall hawkweeds, would also be added as a Class B weed. First found in Pend Oreille County, it is proposed for mandatory control in the entire state except Pend Oreille and Stevens County and that portion of Spokane County north of the Spokane River.

Nominated as a new Class C weed is common groundsel, also known as *Senecio vulgaris*. Several livestock deaths in the past two years have been blamed on hay that came from farm fields that had unusually high concentrations of this toxic weed.

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A new knotweed, dubbed Bohemian knotweed, would become a Class C weed, along with hairy willow-herb, which is increasingly being found in wetland areas and sometimes even out-competes the notorious plant invader purple loosestrife.

Plants listed as Class C weeds are those that local weed boards and districts can choose whether to require control or to simply provide education or technical consultation on control. These weeds are already widely established in Washington or are of special interest to the state's agricultural industry.

Efforts to control Brazilian elodea, a serious aquatic pest plant, would be strengthened in the state's most populous county under another proposal. Already a Class B noxious weed, and with a botanical name of *Egeria densa*, it would be designated for mandatory control in all King County lakes, except Lake Washington, Lake Union, Lake Sammamish and Lake Fenwick. Another proposal would change myrtle spurge from a Class C to a Class B weed, and require control in Pend Oreille County.

Other proposals would change the geographic areas for mandatory control of gorse, yellow hawkweed, spotted knapweed, giant and Himalayan knotweeds and saltcedar.

For a copy of the proposed changes , or to submit written comments, contact Steve McGonigal, executive director, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504. Comments can be faxed to (360) 902-2094 or e-mailed to smcgonigal@agr.wa.gov. Comments must be received by 5 p.m. Nov. 11 to be considered.

For more information, visit the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board's Web site at www.nwcb.wa.gov.

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